

Gabapentin

Neurontin®, Aclonium®, Equipax®, Gantin®, Neurostil® and Progresse® are other names for this medication.

How Is This Medication Useful?

- Gabapentin is used for chronic pain in dogs and cats, especially for nerve pain. Gabapentin does not seem to be effective for treating acute pain, though it can be effective for preventing surgical pain, when given prior to surgery.
- Gabapentin is also used to treat dogs with epilepsy, along with other anti-seizure medications.
- Gabapentin is used in cats, given prior to vet visits to reduce anxiety and aggressive behavior.
- In people, gabapentin is used to treat allodynia (painful response to stimuli that is not normally painful) and hyperalgesia (exaggerated pain response).

Are There Conditions or Times When Its Use Might Cause More Harm Than Good?

- Gabapentin should be used with caution in dogs with kidney disease.
- Gabapentin is present in the milk, and should be used in pregnant or nursing mothers only when benefits outweigh potential risks. The FDA categorizes gabapentin as a category **C** drug for use during pregnancy (preliminary animal studies have shown an adverse effect on the fetus, but there aren't adequate studies in humans or animals).
- There is a liquid formulation of gabapentin which contains the artificial sweetener xylitol. This formulation should not be given to dogs, as xylitol is severely toxic to dogs and cats.

What Side Effects Can Be Seen With Its Use?

- Gabapentin can cause sleepiness and poor coordination, like most of the other anti-seizure drugs. Peak effects occur about 2 hours after dosing.
- Gabapentin can cause a false positive test result for protein in the urine on urinalysis dipsticks.

How Should It Be Given?

- Gabapentin should not be stopped abruptly, as this can lead to increased seizure activity. The drug should be stopped only under the direction of your veterinarian, and should be withdrawn gradually.
- The successful outcome of your animal's treatment with this medication depends upon your commitment and ability to administer it exactly as the veterinarian has prescribed. Please do not skip doses or stop giving the medication. If you have difficulty giving doses consult your veterinarian or pharmacist who can offer administration techniques or change the dosage form to a type of medication that may be more acceptable to you and your animal. If you miss a dose of this medication you should give it as soon as you remember it, and give the next scheduled dose next time it is due.
- Gabapentin should not be given within 2 hours of antacids such as cimetidine (Tagamet®), ranitidine (Zantac®), famotidine (Pepcid®), or omeprazole (Prilosec®). Giving gabapentin with antacids can decrease its effectiveness.
- Administering pain medications such as hydrocodone or morphine with gabapentin can increase its effectiveness and also possibly increase side effects.
- Some other drugs can interact with this medication so tell your veterinarian about any drugs or foods that you currently give your animal. Do not give new foods or medications without first asking your veterinarian.
- Dogs and Cats: Dogs usually receive this drug orally twice to three times daily.
- An extended release form of gabapentin is available for people, but it has not been well studied in pets.

What Other Information Is Important About This Medication?

- Gabapentin should be stored in a childproof container away from all children and other household pets.

References:

Plumb Veterinary Drug Handbook.
Wendy Blount, DVM - PracticalVetMed